



Fact Sheet

The Forest Service is currently inviting public comment on a proposed Colorado Roadless Rule and Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement (RDEIS). The 90-day comment period begins April 15, 2011 and ends on July 14, 2011.

Background on the 2001 Rule and the State Petition

The 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule (2001 Rule), established nationwide prohibitions generally limiting, with some exceptions, timber harvest and road construction and reconstruction within inventoried roadless areas on national forests, grasslands, and prairies.

Ten lawsuits have been filed against the 2001 Roadless Rule. It has been alternately enjoined and reinstated, and is currently enjoined under the order of Wyoming Federal District Judge Brimmer. In 2005, the Department of Agriculture issued the 2005 State Petitions for Inventoried Roadless Area Management Rule (70 FR 25654). Subsequently, Bill Owens, then Governor of Colorado, signed Colorado Senate Bill 05-243, creating a 13-member bipartisan task force to provide official recommendations, based on public comment, for management of roadless areas in Colorado.

In 2007, Colorado Governor Bill Ritter submitted a State petition based on these recommendations to Secretary Mike Johanns. Secretary Johanns accepted the petition upon review by the Roadless Area Conservation National Advisory Committee (RACNAC), and directed the Forest Service to initiate rulemaking. A proposed roadless rule for Colorado and an associated Draft EIS were published in July 2008 and public comment was solicited. Based on public comments, the State of Colorado decided to revise its petition and reexamine the inventory of roadless areas.

Colorado State Governor Ritter submitted the revised State petition to Secretary Tom Vilsack on April 6, 2010. Secretary Vilsack directed the Forest Service to move forward with the rulemaking process.

Proposed Colorado Roadless Rule Contents and Status

Four alternatives presented in the RDEIS are:

- Alternative 1 – the provisions of the 2001 rule
- Alternative 2 – Colorado Roadless Rule – proposed action – with some upper tier acres.
- Alternative 3 – Forest Plan (no action alternative – no rule would be signed).
- Alternative 4 – Colorado Roadless Rule with a different set of upper tier acres.

Alternative 2 is the proposed action, also called the Colorado Roadless Rule, and is based on the petition submitted by the State of Colorado to the Secretary of Agriculture.

The proposed rule identifies 562,000 acres for Upper Tier protection, which provides higher levels of protection than the 2001 Rule. The proposed rule has an updated inventory that protects areas not identified in the 2001 Rule, and it has additional restrictions on oil and gas development and linear construction zones. The proposed rule allows limited exceptions, for example, temporary roads for community wildfire protection; which requires Regional Forester approval.

Comments received during the 90-day comment period on the proposed Colorado Roadless Rule and RDEIS will be used to produce a final Colorado Roadless Rule and Environmental Impact Statement. Colorado citizens may also participate in any of the eight public forums to be hosted in various locations throughout the state during the comment period. Final documents are expected to be signed by the Secretary of Agriculture and published in early 2012.